

E 165

.D616

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00001091359





2432
SOME

NOTES ON AMERICA

TO BE REWRITTEN:

Suggested, with Respect, to

CHARLES DICKENS, ESQ.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

Pe PHILADELPHIA:
SHERMAN & CO., PRINTERS
1868.

E 165
D 616

P R E F A C E.

THAN the writer, no one more honors and esteems Mr. Dickens, and sooner would he that his right hand forgot its cunning than indite aught that could convey a shadow of offence to that gifted man. If, therefore, there be in this trifle a single line that may be construed unfavorably, it will be to the great and lasting regret of the author.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1868,
In the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

NOTES ON AMERICA.

MR. DICKENS in America again! "Boz" among the Yankees! He has once more left the green fields of England, relinquished for a time *dulce domum*, turned his back for a while on London fogs and unwholesome damp, passed through all the *désagrémens* of an Atlantic voyage, braved sea-sickness, and all the little experiences he describes in the second chapter of "Notes on America," under the head of the "passage out;" all this to come to the land of Jefferson Brick and Colonel Diver. What will they do with him? The question is already answered, is being answered now; and the interrogatory is, what have they *not* done? What have the American people left undone to prove that they appreciate genius, honor talent, even though it come to them in the person of one who indulged in no gentle chidings of their sayings and their doings, their follies and their foibles, and pitched into their speeches as well as their spittoons? And this, despite the angry growlings of a few outer barbarians, jealous, less of the good repute of America and Americans, than of the reputation of Charles Dickens, and more than all, of Charles Dickens, *successful* author.

But the American people, the best and wisest, the cultivated and the refined, felt, that if there were some things to be borne in mind which had irritated the *flesh* as *Americans*, there was more, much more, to be remembered, which had stirred their hearts as men and women ; that if "Elijah Pogram" and "Jefferson Brick" twitted them as a nation, "Tom Pinch," "Tiny Tim," "Little Nell," moved them as human beings. Such of them as were parents, felt grateful to the man who had opened up such a world of enjoyment to their little ones, grateful for the merry laugh that bubbled up, and not the less thankful for the moistened eye and swelling heart that indicated their appreciation of the characters he drew.

I think it was Thackeray who said : he thanked God that he lived in an age and in a country when and where, such a character as Little Nell was drawn ; he felt gratitude to the man who drew it, when he saw the delight of his children at its perusal, and watched their alternate tears and smiles.

Heart and hand then has Dickens been welcomed, and such a welcome ! !

The portly gentleman who called at "Scrooge's" counting-house on the eventful eve before that glorious Christmas morning, could not have been more surprised when Scrooge greeted him with a "merry Christmas," than Mr. Dickens must have been at his reception.

Bob Cratchit, it will be remembered, had some idea of knocking Scrooge down with a ruler. His pleasantry surprised and alarmed him, when he, Scrooge, remarked : "I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer, and, therefore, I am about to raise your salary." A ruler

would have been a very ineffectual weapon amongst the large audiences assembled to hear Mr. Dickens, and all the asylums in the States could never have furnished the requisite number of strait waistcoats (another of Bob's thoughts at the moment), not to mention that the modern treatment deprecates their use; but there can be no question that Mr. Dickens must have felt the least bit in the world staggered, if not to the extent of rulers and strait waistcoats, when this great people rose up like one man and gave him such a stupendous welcome; when this people virtually said to him: "Look you, Charles Dickens, author of *Notes on America*, and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, you have hit us mighty hard, given us several *facers*, and with ungentle hand administered stripes on the national back, but it is all scored off now; you have tickled us and we have laughed, while you have touched our hearts hundreds and hundreds of times. About that little speculation to 'pay expenses' (as suggested by Mr. Sam Weller), we now can afford to laugh with you over it. *You* are a man of genius; *we* are a great people, you know it; we can afford to welcome you, and we do; so '*Carol*' away, Charles Dickens."

And Charles Dickens, before he articulated the words announcing the demise of Marley,—“Marley was dead, to begin with,”—must have felt, “Yes! a great and a generous people—*Ecce signum!*”

What thoughts must have crowded on him as he faced the audiences of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia? What thoughts will continue to press upon him; what

materials for another book? And such a change of material!

Let us glance at a few of the "Notes," and see if we cannot find here and there, some that can be *rewritten*. Here you are again in Broadway, Mr. Dickens. No "pigs" there now. As likely to meet even one solitary stroller, as in the aristocratic precincts of Hyde Park corner, or Belgrave Square, London. If all flesh is pork, as the typical Broadway sow reflected in the wanderings and ponderings placed to her account, *said* pork, is packed away from sight, and exported to distant lands, where all flesh may be grass, but is *not* pork. That sow has long since gone to the "bourne from whence no traveller returns," whether sow, or sinner, transmitting her honors to no porcine heirs or heiresses to take their walks abroad and revel in the reversion of cabbage-stalks and offal. No pigs, aye, and no beggars; no squalid, shoeless, starving human beings, glad of that very offal which there are no pigs to enjoy; no swine in human form coming between the sun and one's enjoyment of it, as we say. "Let us cross Broadway."

"But how quiet the streets are! Are there no itinerant bands, no wind or stringed instruments? No, not one. By day are there no Punches, Fantocinis, dancing dogs, jugglers, conjurors, orchestrinas, or even barrel-organs? No, not one." (Dickens Script. Notes on America, New York.) None of these, my dear sir? Look again. Barnum! Triton of caterers, Jupiter Tonans of Showmen, "far-sighted summoner" of dwarfs and giants, inventor of the *Gias-cutis* and the *What-is-it?* assert yourself. But more than

this, listen to an Itinerant Exhibiter: "Walk up, walk up, ladies and gentlemen," walk up, Mr. D., listen to your own "Jarley," "Jarley," the pet of crowned heads, the favorite of monarchs. Don't you recognize the resemblance to your own creation?

Here is a "pig-faced lady," there, the *Rijum fungus*, "an *amphibilious* animal, ladies and gentlemen (says *our* Showman). By amphibilious, my friends, is meant an animal that *can't* live on land, and *always dies* in the water; walk up and judge for yourselves." A little way on, we are invited to the African twins, whom, we are informed, "no one should fail to see; the anatomical wonder of the age. They have been seen and examined by Dr. Mott, Sir Benjamin Brodie, and all the great physicians. Nothing like them in the known world, and the enterprising proprietor, who had to go on his bended knees and give a million dollars to get them, has made arrangements to *prevent a repetition of these marvellous freaks of nature*. Walk up, ladies and gentlemen." Walk up, Mr. Dickens, now or never.

Is not the *genus* Jarley well represented?

Barrel-organs in plenty: there goes the "Wearing of the green" in discordant rivalry with "Tramp, tramp, the boys are marching," and there has just passed a band of negro minstrels, followed by the street Arabs of New York. Lots of barrel-organs, but no Mr. Babbage* to run a crusade against them, as in London. "Quiet streets!"

* The great calculator, who is always complaining before the Police Courts of the "organ nuisance."

Hark ! to that ceaseless roar of omnibuses, the press of private equipages, the thronged streets, the gorgeous dresses, the varied colors, all the *indicia* of a thriving, wealthy, populous city, all the signs of progress, and, not wanting either, all the vice that grows with the growth of such. Are we in Broadway New York, or on a Parisian Boulevard ?

In the theatrical line, we might make our selection from a dozen. All tastes can be gratified, from the romantic young lady who dotes on the "Lady of Lyons," to the *habitué* who goes in for nothing under two murders and a suicide.

You will see good acting, Mr. Dickens, and I can promise you too, some as execrable stuff as ever drew down the applause of the "Gods" in any temple dedicated to the His-trionic Muse on the Surrey side of the Thames, if this is a sign of progress. You can have "Richelieu," or "Virginus," in tragedy ; "Still Waters Run Deep," or the "Love Chase," in comedy, or if thus your tastes incline, you can be regaled with the real old heavy style of melodrama, from the Brutal Barons of the Haunted Castle on the Rhine, to the Villanous Vampire of the Valley ; dresses and appurtenances all in keeping.

One little ingredient, however, is wanting, to which we are so accustomed at home. In no theatre here does the "popular indignation take the form of nuts ;" nor are the actors regaled with ovations in the shape of orange-peel, demonstrations which the reader may remember pursued Mr. Wopsle in the inoffensive character of Hamlet, on the

occasion of Pip's visit to Denmark, as detailed faithfully in "Great Expectations."

Philadelphia, too, can boast a goodly number of theatres, and all the hoardings and blank walls are resplendent with gigantic bills announcing all sorts of entertainment, from pitch-and-toss, to dramatic manslaughter. Talking of theatres, step here, Charles, friend of my soul, and look at this Academy of Music; and there is one in Philadelphia even finer. Not quite beneath praise or notice, are they? Not *quite*, I think. What is *your* opinion?

No dearth of amusements *now*.

Here we are on the Fifth Avenue. When you have taken in all those mansions and regaled your eyes with the myriad of beauties tripping along like butterflies in the sun, we will drop into Delmonico's. A pretty fair imitation of the Trois Frères Provençaux in the Palais Royal, is it not? Aye, even to the fried frogs, fare *à la Parisienne*, and faith, price *à la Parisienne*, too.

For hotels, the Fifth Avenue of New York, and the Continental of Philadelphia, need not, save in a few particulars, turn tail on the "Grand" hotel (sacred to Southern guests) in Paris, or the "Louvre" of more ancient date.

The railway cars remain as you left them. "Long shabby omnibuses," there is no denying, they *do* resemble, more than anything else. All the passengers huddled together, but *comfortably* huddled, nevertheless.

I shall never forget the look of astonishment, not to say suspicion, with which the ticket-seller regarded me on the occasion of my first railway journey in America, when, in

my innocence as to their construction, I asked for a *first-class ticket*. Had I gone up to the proprietor of a *menagerie* at feeding-time, and solicited as a particular favor to be placed in the cage with the Panther or the Bengal Tiger, I could hardly have been regarded with greater astonishment. I believe he was of opinion that I had committed some felony, and was escaping, hence my desire for exclusiveness. But if they have their objections, there are great set-offs to their advantage. No such murder as that of Mr. Briggs in an English carriage, can possibly be perpetrated in them where there are such numbers, and ladies may travel without even so much as an insulting look being cast on them. Communication with the guard, owing to the construction of these cars, is easy, and within reach of every one; a desideratum not yet supplied on *our* trains.

In spite of this, however, our cousins *do* enjoy a singular pre-eminence in railway accidents it must be admitted; and it does look odd to see a great long train going pell-mell through a village, now dashing past a potato stall, now making a *detour* round a confectioner's window close enough to enable one to pocket a piece of candy, now dodging some perambulators containing young Americas, out for an airing, and all as unconcerned, Passengers, Perambulators, Villagers, as if it were a water-cart drawn by a blind donkey.

Far from any concern being evinced, some of the servant-maids in charge of these perambulators seemed to me to regard the trains with an air of mingled defiance and contempt, as who should say, "If you will make less fuss and

abate your hurry, I'll get this out the way and let you pass;" while the little things, in their *gigantic* conveyances, appeared to me to wink to the Engine-driver, and only wanted tongue to say, "Go ahead; don't be alarmed; the *Locomotive* is quite safe."

"Fires frequent"? Yes! But where else is the devouring element battled with and overcome as here?

There's a monster for you, bright as a sovereign fresh from Her Majesty's mint, strong as iron and steel in the hands of skilful artificers can make it. There, snorting as it goes, steaming up as it goes, shrieking lustily as it goes; its bright bell ringing out clear, loud, and cheerful, seeming to say to the fire, "I am coming, I am coming! You have it all your own way now, but before that second beam that is shrinking with fright at your expected embrace shall feel you lapping it, I will be upon you, throwing a deluge, enough to float another ark."

Then the fire stations, and the Central office with the telegraphic communications to all the former; pay these a visit, and a combination of the perfection of skill and ingenuity is presented, that have their parallel nowhere in the world.

Take a glance at the police station-houses. See how complete the arrangements for the comfort of the men, the cleanliness and ventilation of the cells for the prisoners, all lighted and warmed; the office and apartments for the superintending sergeant, the rapidity and promptness with which one office communicates with the other,

the code of telegraphic signals for this purpose. "Note" all these. They are worth the noting.

Now then for the river boats, the steamboats that you have reviled and contemned. What coals of fire will be heaped on your devoted head when you contrast them with those described in "Notes!" I would invite you to step on board that one just leaving the pier; but will you be able to see your face reflected in those costly mirrors that adorn the gorgeous saloon, summon up courage to tread those downy carpets, dispose your limbs to press those luxurious spring cushions on that sofa resplendent with green and gold, without dire remorse? You are human, and dare not travel in one of them unconcerned, and I pity the agony you will endure. Every stroke of the piston will say to you, "Rewrite those notes! Rewrite those notes!"

The chewing and tobacco question next.

You were pretty rough here, *Carlo Mio*; what I have sometimes heard rendered in Transatlantic vernacular, as "rocky." You must draw it milder in your next. To say that the practice of chewing and expectorating is "inseparably mixed up with every meal and morning call," is drawing it pretty powerfully on the imagination, and is *inseparably* to mix up *your* observation with an irresistible desire on the part of your reader to exclaim in expressive, but unclassic English, "*gammon*." With the former, that is the meals, *I* have invariably found tomatoes, in some form or other (in summer-time at least),

inseparably mixed up, and, with the few morning calls I have made, pleasant conversation, and very nice confectionery.

Whether or not legislation and chewing follow one another as effect and cause, I am not in a position to say, never having been in the Senate-House in Washington, and for the same reason, I am in blissful ignorance of the state of the carpet. It may, as you state, be still unsafe to "drop a handkerchief" thereon, or it may not; but I am sure that the practice is much on the decline everywhere—certainly so in New York and Philadelphia—and I am confirmed in this opinion from the circumstance that an enterprising trader advertising the "Century Chewing Tobacco" holds out, as an inducement for investment, the chance of the purchaser finding a twenty dollar note in the midst of the package containing the saliva-inducing leaf. This looks like a falling off, I think; so let us *eschew* the tobacco question.

As far as the little scenes between honorable members go, the inmates of St. Stephen's have of late, you will admit, been making several efforts towards imitation in this direction, and with tolerable success too.

Delicate personal allusions *do* drop on the ear now and then in the Palace at Westminster.*

Excuse me, but is there not a homely proverb but trite, relating to inhabitants of crystal domiciles, recommending caution in throwing missiles? *Verbum sap.* You really must "*fix*" this in your next book.

By the way, while I think of it, permit me to give you

* The British Houses of Parliament.

a friendly hint. It is a little personal, but you will pardon it I am sure for the intention. You have referred to Philadelphia in rather a kindly way, but with sly sneers at its quietness and Quaker aspect. Now be advised by me, and when you walk in its streets don't get yourself up in the manner you described your dress and appearance, as involuntarily assuming on the occasion of your last visit, "stiff coat-collar, broad brimmed hat, hair, short cropped and stiffened, and hands folded on breast." (See American Notes, Philadelphia.) And, above all, if you are so rash as to disregard this suggestion, don't go along Walnut Street of all others, in that trim. It is full of Doctors, and nothing could be more convenient or handy than to procure a medical certificate which would consign you to Dr. Kirkbride's Asylum, an Institution from which Hanwell and Colney Hatch* may take useful lessons, and which is a positive marvel in the way of an asylum for the insane.

No, sir. Place on your eranium, and it is worth adorning too, the latest Paris hat, fit to your nether limbs the tightest of bifurcations, array yourself in a coat like a modern dandy, not forgetting a diamond scarf-pin (for Americans are perfect Russians in their love of diamonds), and then you may pass safely through the press. If you *do* cross your hands on your breast, look to your gloves, my friend. Every one here is *bien ganté*, more's the pity, for gloves come pretty heavy on this side the herring pond.

But little Quakerly influence (at least so far as dress goes) manifests itself in those tidy, jaunty Bismarck dresses, those puce velvets, those pretty boots with their

* English Lunatic Asylums.

high heels, and that light elastic step. Look again, and you will say, "Indeed we *are* growing up."

Aye, and of this growth, here and elsewhere, you will write and publish to the world; and the praises you can justly bestow on America adolescent, will put out of memory the stripes administered in her juvenile days. No one can do this better than can you, few as well, certainly none from whom praise would come with so good a grace.

But the best of the joke is, that the "Notes" and "Martin Chuzzlewit" are selling more than ever,

"For those now read who never read before,
And those who have, now do so all the more."

"Take this," I heard a bookseller say to-day to an intending purchaser, pointing to "Martin Chuzzlewit:" "Take this one; it is where he abuses us most,—it is capital fun;" and he laughed as though he would say, "A good joke, is it not? Rather late in the day to be angry." Seller and buyer both enjoyed the idea, and the book changed hands for the thousandth time that day. Resentment, like rocking-chairs, has passed away; to many it was unknown. Resentment! Why your books fill every window, and are piled up to the roofs.

In vellum, in morocco, in calf, in boards, in paper, you are lying about, and, *mirabile dictu*, your photograph, in all imaginary sizes and attitudes, strew the counters. You are so much the rage that I expect to see in the store windows displayed, the Dickens mantle, the Dickens hat, the Boz collar. In short, you are, at this moment, to use the

language of Colonel Diver, "The most remarkable man in the country."

Please direct your attention to the fact that the Girard College, of Philadelphia, alluded to in "Notes" as a thing *to be* done, has been completed "a long while ago," and is an ornament to the city, as well as a monument to the catholic sentiment which pervades all Educational Institutions of America. Sectarianism here is a dead letter, and in this single, this simple, but really great fact, pervading as it does all such charities, lies the secret and the source of the prodigious advancement of this country.

The Press too, the Press that you came down upon, tooth and nail, in "Martin Chuzzlewit," have they not almost without an exception, behaved generously, aye, nobly? Few, if any, casting a stone, where the temptation was great. No necessity now to wend one's way through the intricacies of narrow streets, as did Martin Chuzzlewit and the jolly Mark Tapley, to get to a newspaper office. No red-brick houses with their garish signs to indicate them, but stately edifices, not printing offices, but printing palaces, proudly fronting and gracing the streets in which they are situated.

No more "*New York Sewers*," "*New York Private Listener*" or "*Rowdy Journal*." (See Martin Chuzzlewit.) In their stead, hark to names more familiar to Anglican ears: "Times," "Herald," "Star," "Bulletin," "Telegraph," "Press," and a legion of others, all teeming with gossip, it is true, but not of the affairs of private families; gossip from the uttermost ends of the earth, ranging from

the newest thing in pearl powder and Paris bonnets, to the latest edict of the Tycoon of Japan or the most recent atrocity of the King of Dahomey, the movements of the Abyssinian expedition, the speech of the Queen of Spain to the Cortes, what Bismarck said to the North German Confederation, Jules Favré's latest declamation in the French Chamber of Deputies, the newest vagary of Beales, M.A.,* the last debate in the House of Commons on the Alabama claims.

Think of this change, and, instead of a voice saying into yours, as it did into Martin's ear, alluding to the "Sewer" and the "Rowdy"—"It is in such enlightened means that the bubbling passions of my country finds vent," *you* will say aloud: "It is by such enlightened means that the energy and the intellect of this mighty nation is fostered." And to the inquiry made by any Colonel Diver (if any such still survive): "How do you like my country, sir?" *you* will reply—but no one can answer as *you* can and will yourself, so we must look for it in your new "Notes."

The "New Thermopylæ" and the "Eden" of the *then*, *you* will find the flourishing gigantic cities of to-day. No need *now* for a house-agent of the genus "Scadder" to pore over a "*bogus*" plan with his tooth-pick to find the site for a mythical market-place that Martin was to design. No, sir; take a ticket from New York, place yourself in a railway carriage, and *you* will be there in the course of thirty-six hours at most. *You* will hardly then believe that *you* have left New York, so little provincial

* One of the English Radical sympathizers and a *Bright* supporter of Reform.

is the aspect of the place. Yet, Sir, you are in the Emporium of the West. Full of "*architecture*" and Architects too.

Where a "scanty crop of Indian corn was growing among the stumps and ashes of burnt trees," (see Martin Chuzzlewit,) there have now grown up edifices of which any European city might be proud; and where "the fallen logs lay hidden in the soil," there now uprears a fine hall, in which you will, before you leave, be listened to by a fashionable, intelligent, and appreciative audience. *Not one* Mrs. Homminy to be found amongst them. Not even a "red pocket-handkerchief."

"As by the stroke of an enchanter's wand," cities have sprung up, and not like the tenements in a pantomime either, as you will admit when you see them.

On the site of Chuzzlewit's log-hut, *prima donnas* rouse the echoes in *cavatinas*, *cantatas*, and all the musical terminations; and where was *then* "frowsy underwood and rank grass," is *now* an Educational Institute, or some such establishment, in which it may be, on the evening of this very day, a lecture will be delivered "On Charles Dickens and his writings."

Excuse me for quoting you so often, but, looking at these things, I think there would be some justice, if not elegance, in the symbolical observation of the Colonel, as applied to the country, "Sir, we are a young lion."

Permit me further, as a compatriot, to observe (I quote you again), "that here is a spectacle calculated to make the British lion" (not put his tail between his legs, as suggested by the Colonel), but change his "Notes."

And, supposing you to represent for a time the dignity of Britain's Royal Felis Leo, well may the "Eagles of the great Republic laugh" (the Colonel again), as they courteously welcome you, and chaffingly point out the "Eden" and the "Thermopylæ" of *then* and *now*. No chance for a Mark Tapley to be "jolly" under difficulties here. He would find the fates had determined to make even Eden "easy to him;" a calamity which, those acquainted with Mark, will know, was calculated, in *his* estimation, to take away all the "*credit*" from being "jolly."

Well may all the young Eaglets too, be laughing, chaffing, buying your books, and defying you the while, to be otherwise than convinced by the overwhelming argument of facts.

Talking of books. There are some publishing firms that even the magnates of Paternoster Row* would regard with admiration. Book warehouses as large as cotton store-rooms, and showing like some of the gigantic warerooms of St. Paul's Churchyard. Witness: Lippincott, of Philadelphia, Appleton, of New York, Ticknor & Fields, of Boston, in either of whose establishments may be got any work, from the "Tale of a Tub" to the "Talmud;" the *alpha* to the *omega* of printed matter.

What an unworked mine, what unexplored depths, what veins of virgin ore are ready for you, ready to your hand, waiting to take life and form at your bidding, waiting for

* A street in the city of London almost entirely occupied by publishers and booksellers, and amongst them the oldest and most celebrated.

your master touch to shape, individualize them, and to give to the world America, and Americans, as they are. Their banks and their boarding-houses, hotels and hospitals, schools, colleges, and all the life within these, down to their bars and brandy smashes.

May you be spared life and energy to work this new field. I am sure you will not disappoint these "Great Expectations," but will prove yourself the "Mutual Friend" of America and England.

Out of a mighty and tremendous struggle this nation has come out glorious and conquering: the manacles have been struck from the slave; not a star of America's banner sheds its ray upon a bondsman, and the "genius of universal emancipation" pervades the length and breadth of the land. She is marching onward, step for step with the foremost nations of the earth, and in the words of one of her own orators in the days of her glorious struggle for independence, "Who shall say that when the European column shall have mouldered into dust, and the night of barbarism obscured its very ruins, this mighty continent may not emerge from the horizon to rule for a time, sovereign of the ascendant?"

The fulness of time will answer this question. Do *you* in the present, write out for "general circulation," some fresh "Notes on America."

Am





WERT
BOOKBINDING
Grantville, Pa.
July-August 1988
We re-Quality-Bound

